



Dear all,

The long hot summer was generally good for grapes. There has been some lovely ripeness and 'clean' (disease free) fruit, so 2022 will go down as a great vintage. Certainly riper than 2021 if not as big as 2018, not least as some of our vineyards suffered in the heat and others saw their yields down as the berries didn't swell due to the lack of rain. Although it was a very wet autumn, the mild weather did make for an extended harvest - our first grapes arrived on 13 September (two weeks earlier than last year) and the last on 15 November, although apart from two late parcels we effectively finished three weeks before this.



*Pressed grapes ('marc') off to compost*

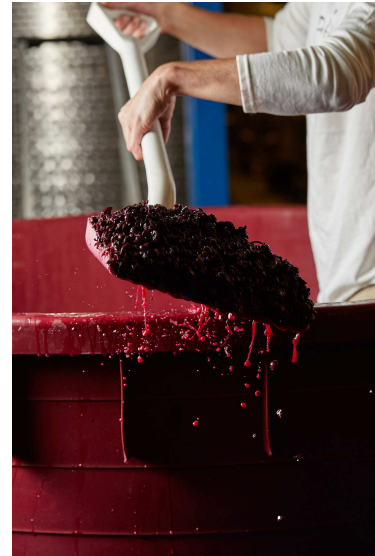


*Wine samples for testing*

In all we pressed twenty different grape varieties for thirty different vineyards and some brands. There are therefore a huge number and range of wines in the winery. This number will slowly reduce as ferments finish, blends are made, barrels are filled and tanks are topped out (to prevent 'ullage' the gap between the top of the wine and the top of the tank which can lead to oxidation and spoiling in the same way as the half drunk bottle in your kitchen). This has involved hours of work by the lab and winery team.

Despite some tanks only arriving in early October and the inevitable other glitches that come from

operating 24/7 during the peak harvest period, it went smoothly. This was entirely due to the quality of our staff, so a huge thank-you to all of them for the time and effort they put in, especially when working long shifts in sometimes miserable weather.



*'Digging out' a red ferment*



*Sampling from barrels*

Harvest having been all consuming, both in the run up and during harvest itself, now it is all over we have been able to get back to other things. Production has restarted and we have already bottled our first wines from 2022. Made in the 'ancestral method', these 'PetNats' were bottled part way through fermentation, so they will finish fermenting in bottle making them sparkling. We have also re-started disgorging 'traditional method' sparkling wines for people in time for Christmas sales. Last week Nick, Poppy, Pete and I headed to a huge winery equipment trade show in Milan which was fascinating and has given us lots of ideas.



*Pressing red grapes - after they have fermented on their skins*

More locally, our landlord has submitted plans to build a new winery for Chapel Down on the land next to us. We have been allocated space for another building which I envisage using for an upgraded production area and more storage. It will make us part of a wine hub here which I think will be really positive for the English wine industry, Canterbury and us. We are very different to Chapel Down and will remain separate, so there is no competition but I am sure we can benefit from working closely together. It has been in the local papers - Kent Online.

Enjoy the rest of the year and look out for 2022 English wines next year!

Regards,

Henry



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